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VINDICATION
OF
PRESBYTERIAN
ORDINATION
AND
BAPTISM;

FROM THE
ASPERSIONS and CONTEMPT
which have been of late most invidiously
thrown upon them.

OCCASION'D
By certain REBAPTIZATIONS, and other
INNOVATIONS, lately practis'd in the
Parish of *Bury*, in *Lancashire*.

By E. ROTHWELL.

*He shall bring forth thy Righteousness as the Light, and
thy Judgment as the Noon-day, Psal. xxxvii. 6.*

Conscia mens recti famæ mendacia ridet.

L O N D O N :

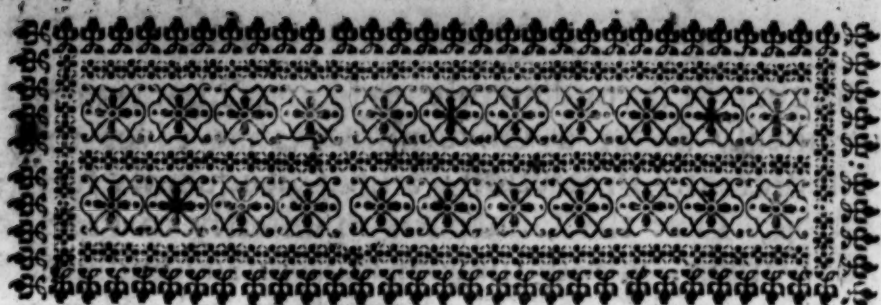
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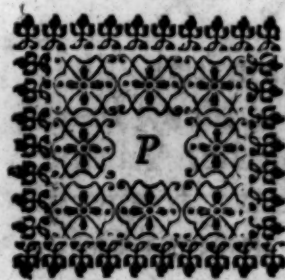


DONATUS, an African by Birth and Nation, taught, That that Church only was a true Church, which was free from all Stain and Pollution ; whereupon many, who had been baptized by the Orthodox, he rebaptized. He lived in the 326th Year after Christ, and in the Time of Constantine the Great, and Athanasius. Such as follow'd him in his Hereſy were called Donatiſts.





A
VINDICATION
Of Presbyterian
Ordination, and Baptism.

 **P**LUTARCH, that famous Historian, tells us, That *Themistocles* was so extremely offended at the Favour which *Aristides* found at *Athens*, that when he had no other Matter of Exception against him, he suggested to the People, that by his Management and Behaviour (though in it self just and upright) it did appear, he intended to ingross all Matters of Judicature into his own Hands; and thereby affected the sole Power of ruling, and the Eversion of all their other Tribunals, for which *Themistocles* caused him to be punished. How justly this celebrated Writer may represent this Matter, I shan't presume critically to determine; but from my own personal Observation am bold to affirm, That the sober Protestant Dissenters in this Part of *Great Britain* have met with the like Treatment, from some of their Brethren of the Establish'd Church.

Church. 'Tis undeniably evident, That many are uneasy under a Government that gives the Dissenters any Protection; and are frequently suggesting, That the Church is manifestly in Peril, and Danger, whilst they are tolerated, and not warmly chastis'd with the Scourge of wholesome Severities: And most of all since the Occasional and Schism Acts are abrogated, and repeal'd; and some Way pretended to be made towards their stepping into Places of Honour and Profit under the Government. But the Right Reverend the Bishop of *Bangor* has asserted, and vindicated their common Rights, as Subjects; proving to the Satisfaction of any reasonable Man, that the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was never instituted with a Design to be a Test to qualify any Person for a Civil Office; but for more sublime, noble, and sacred Ends.

'Tis, moreover, suggested and insinuated, That the Dissenters Lust of Power is evident from their stickling so warmly for the further Taking off of some legal Restraints, that have formerly been laid upon them; and that, in such Case, the Church will be without any Fence, or Guard. Formerly the heavy Charge of a damnable Schism has been sounded forth, almost from every Pulpit, against the Dissenters; and he accounted the most genuine Son of the Church that could most nicely define the Nature of Schism, and send them strait to Hell in the Definition: But now, alas! it has so unhappily fallen out, of late Years, that there has been a most dismal, dreadful, and gaping Schism among themselves. The genuine Church of the *Deprivation*, monopolizing the sole Ecclesiastical Power, True Ministry, Right of Ordination, and all Regular Administrations, to themselves, and fulminating out most terrible
Anathema's,

Anathemas, and Excommunications, from the second Canon, upon the Church of the *Revolution*: I say, since Dr. *Hicks*, and his Followers, have set this Schism a going, and discharged a Canon after it, we have not been so vigorously attack'd from this Quarter. This Topic, becoming a little unpromising, is almost deferred; and, like the Doctrine of the old Peripatetics, grows obsolete, and antiquated.

Now, and of late, our Opposites erect their Batteries on another Fort; and the loud and common Cry is, Dissenting, and Presbyterian Ministers, are no Ministers, but meer Laymen, and Usurpers, or most profane Intruders upon that Sacred Function; all their Administrations are *ipso facto* void and null: They have no Power, or Authority, to preach as Ministers of Christ, to exercise any Discipline in his Church; no Commission to warrant their administering Baptism, and the Lord's Supper; and all this because not ordained by the Imposition of the Hands of a Diocesan Bishop: No Exception, or Charity, at all being reserv'd either for the establish'd Church in *North Britain*, or for the many, and most excellent Reformed Churches abroad; nor for the best qualify'd Ministers of this Denomination amongst our selves. The Foundation of this rigid Notion once laid, the vulgar in public, and common Conversation, have been told, with a strange Air of Assurance, that such as had no other Baptism, but from the Hands of a Presbyterian Minister, are still unbaptiz'd; no Christians, but a Sort of Pagans, and Heathens. Some poor, ignorant, credulous, bigotted Souls, have taken the Hint, and the Alarm (and one need not wonder much if they did, when formidable Notions are so frequently, and confidently, buzz'd into their Ears) and

and have instantly been full of Fears, and Doubts³ and Scruples, about their Christianity; and, as the surest Way to dispel and remove 'em, have most humbly beseech'd certain Curates, who knew their own Names, to baptize them into the Only Right-Way. The Curates being full of Compassion, have, upon a fair Opportunity offer'd, fallen to, and effectually conjur'd down the restless Spirit of Fear, Terror, and Consternation, which themselves had industriously rais'd, and set a working: After their Rebaptization all has been (in their own Account) sound and well.

Two late Instances we have had in the Parish of *Bury*; Three Persons, at least; rebaptiz'd in the Parish-Church, a Year or Two ago; One or more of them married Persons: Two of them very solemnly dedicated to the Sacred Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; with Prayer for a Benediction upon the Children so baptiz'd in their Infancy, with Pouring on of Water, according to Christ's Institution, by the Hands of the late Reverend Mr. *Pendlebury*, an ejected Minister of singular Learning, Gravity, Piety, and Orthodoxy, as most of his Time, and as all that knew him would have own'd, whether Conformists, or Non-Conformists, of the Clergy or Laity. The Reverend Mr. *Gipps*, late Rector of *Bury*, has publish'd it to the World in Print, that he believed Mr. *Pendlebury* to be a good Man, in one of his Answers to Mr. *Owen*. He was immediate Predecessor to the present Rector; but never rebaptiz'd any that Mr. *Pendlebury* baptiz'd; nor urged, or so much as permitted any of his Curates to do so, but took such Acts to be good and valid; though himself as rigid and high a Churchman as most of his Contemporaries.

temporaries. Now how this present Generation of the Clergy come to know so much more in this Point than the last, is such a Mystery as I am not able to unfold; I humbly crave Leave to add, That I am pretty confident of it, and have some moral Assurance that they had not this Measure of extraordinary Knowledge from the Word of God; and if they had it from any new Revelation, one would be glad to see their Credentials: 'Tis probable, when they are put a little harder to it, they'll be forc'd to produce them. But to proceed.

The second Instance of their Rebaptization was on Sabbath Day, *July* the 26th, 1719. at *Aitenfield*, in the Afternoon, at the public Chapel there, in the Face of the whole Congregation, where a Son of one *Oliver Grime*, a young Man grown up, was baptiz'd; and also Two Sons of *Rich. Booth*, of *Stubbings*. The Person officiating on this Occasion, was one Mr. *Rider*, a Schoolmaster at *Bury*, who did all in the Presence, and with the Consent of the Reverend Mr. *Banks*, the present Rector of *Bury*, who preached himself there occasionally the same Day. The Two Sons of *Rich. Booth* were above, or about, 20 Years of Age; the One or both of them baptiz'd in their Infancy, as I am inform'd, by the Reverend Mr. *Jo. Whitworth*.

Now at the new Christning aforesaid, the Godfathers of these last young Men were their Uncle, and their own Father; and their Godmothers, their own Mother, and their Sister. The Strangeness of the Thing caused some Kind of Wonder and Amazement in the Congregation, which was pretty numerous, and rais'd some Grief and Vexation in divers of the Spectators, who stood up upon their Seats to behold the Wonder;

Wonder; being very well appriz'd with what Views the whole was acted; and what Sort of Men they were upon whom Contempt and Infamy were intended to be thrown, by that strange Performance. Besides, some who were not present were filled with Wonder too.

1. How a Parent could be admitted, and that canonically, to answer as Godfather, and the Mother as Godmother, for her own Child, when the Words of the 29th Canon, are downright, and point blank against it, *viz. No Parent shall be present, nor be admitted to answer as Godfather for his own Child.* 'Tis likely some know how to answer the ensuing Queries: I foresee, indeed, it will be objected, they are but a Sort of uncouth Questions, and that the Methodizer has no Authority to propose them; however, for the Sake of others who believe that Truth needs no Cover, and is not ashamed to shew her own Face, I shall venture at them.

It may be enquir'd upon this Practice,

1. Whether Conformity to the Church of England in her Rubrick, Articles, and Canons, be a Duty, especially in the Clergy, who are oblig'd to lead the People, go before them, and set them a good Example?

2. Whether any present at the late Re-baptization did ever take an Oath of Canonical Obedience to the Bishop, or their Ordinary, obliging themselves, by the Solemnity of the same, inviolably to keep, observe, and maintain the fore-said Canons?

3. Whether the wilful Violation, or breaking of any of these Canons, by Persons under such indispensable Obligations, and awful Ties, be Perjury?

4. Whether

4. Whether any so engag'd ought to stand by, and see those Canons openly violated, in the Face of a numerous Congregation, and yet never regard it, or so much as pass any Censure upon it?

5. Whether it be reasonable to require or expect, that Protestant Dissenters should come up to the Canons, or Rules of Conformity, whilst the Clergy themselves openly break them, and even culpably neglect them, with Impunity?

6. Whether the Rules of the Gospel, reveal'd in the Sacred Scriptures, be not a surer Guide than disputable Canons, and humane Inventions, so strictly imposed, and so ill observed?

7. What is become of Piety, and Charity in the present Generation, when, rather than not nullify and run down the Orders of Presbyterian Ministers, some Men will adventure, openly, and most notoriously, to break their own?

When the late Innovation is vindicated, I cannot but hope, that an Answer to these Questions will be attempted. But this is not all. Some that were absent admir'd, and well they might,

2. How a Sister could be Godmother to one of her Brothers, when she her self (as I am credibly inform'd) had no other than Presbyterian Baptism. Now, the Case being as it is, the Argument must necessarily fall upon the Horns of this *Dilemma*; either the Sister was baptiz'd, or unbaptiz'd; if the former be true, and the Act good and valid, then her own Brother's Baptism was good and valid too; all depending upon the same Authority, and lying upon the same Foundation. And if all was good and valid, when done, it could not be undone, nor ought the Brothers to be rebaptized, for in this Case the Maxim holds, even *Quod fieri non debuit, factum valet*; Baptism

Baptism being an holy initiating Ordinance of Jesus Christ, which is but once to be administred, and must, by no means be repeated, or reiterated; this, I presume, our most violent Brethren own and acknowledge, and we have no Controversy with them about this Head. Now then, the other Branch of the *Dilemma* falls under Consideration; if the Sister was unbaptiz'd (as upon the aforesaid Supposition must needs be) then, according to their Notion, she was no Christian; if she was no Christian she could not be admitted, whilst such, to the Holy Communion; for we cannot be so uncharitable as to suppose that the *Church of England* would admit Heathens to the Holy Communion, without Christian Baptism: If she had never received the Lord's Supper, then what becomes of another Branch of the same 29th Canon, (*viz.*) "Neither shall any Person be admitted Godfather, or Godmother, to any Child, at Christning, or Confirmation, before the said Person, so undertaking, hath received the Holy Communion?" The Words are express, without Exception, Restriction, or Limitation: Now this Person as she was not capable of the Holy Communion, so not of the aforesaid Susception. But I presume, that many Scores, and Hundreds of Persons, baptiz'd by no other than Presbyterian Ministers, have been, and are frequently, and ordinarily, admitted to the Communion, in the *Church of England* Way, without the Repetition of this Administration. Now very fain would I know, who must answer, or can do it, for this Irregularity, and Inconsistence? I believe, I am able to instance in some, who frequently communicate in *Bury Church*, who have no better a Qualification than that aforesaid. Now supposing this to be Matter of Fact,

Fact, as we must needs suppose it, having such glaring Evidence; pray, can it be for the Honour of the High-Church (espousing their new Principles) to have so many amongst the Members of her special Communion, that are no Christians; so many who stand upon an equal Foot with Unbaptiz'd Pagans, and Heathens; so many who live and die without Baptism? Can it be the Glory of a Church, that pretends to be the Center of Unity to all other Churches in the World, to abound with such Kind of Members; or but to have such interspers'd amongst her other more regular Communicants? If there be any, or many Absurdities in all this, they may even thank their own new Principles and Practices for them.

But to return: Must One Canon be broken twice at a Heat, rather than poor, easy, unthinking, and ignorant People must not be impos'd upon by the Artifices of designing Men? Rather than a favourable Opportunity must be lost of exposing to Contempt and Scorn such Ministers as are not episcopally ordain'd; even then when it is disputed very warmly, whether the *Deprivation-Bishops*, or *Revolution-Bishops*, have the better Claim, and Title, to the Ordaining Power; the one charging the other with intolerable Irregularities; and the former saying, That the other are under a most formidable Excommunication; and, consequently, how dangerous it is to come under their Jurisdictions, and Administrations? Now the Dissenting Ministers would be at a most grievous Loss to know their new Masters, were they so capriciously inclin'd as to change their Service: For my own Part, I am clear in the Point, That we had much better continue as we are, than venture at random, before this Matter

be more amicably concerted among themselves, and they come to a better Agreement ; of which, as yet, we have no promising Symptoms, whilst One of our present Bishops is treated with so little Honour, or Candor, only because he is resolv'd to vindicate the Truth, and the Redeemer's Regal Power. Let me add,

3. It was admir'd upon what Account, or Occasion, Sponsors, or Susceptors, should be made Use of, when their Office was not to hold above Four and Twenty Hours ; when 'twas foreseen they would be discharg'd in less Time than that ; their Rebaptization being about Three of the Clock in the Afternoon, Sabbath Day, *July* the 26th, and their Confirmation, by the Bishop of *Chester*, the next Day, *July* the 27th, betwixt Eleven of the Clock and Two. For, I presume, the Sponsors have always a Discharge at Confirmation ; excepting One Instance only (and, I confess, 'tis somewhat singular) 'tis of a Woman in *Tottington*, who has been confirm'd several Times, some say Four or Five Times, and she likes it so well that she is as ready as ever to embrace another Opportunity. Just so well are some People instructed in the Nature and Ends of Confirmation, and such an hard Task some Godfathers and Godmothers are like to have of it, with ignorant and obstinate People.

Now inasmuch as the New-Baptists were of Age, and grown up, and so very keen of their new Character, one might well have hoped there would have been no manner of Danger of their relapsing into their pristine State of Paganism, and Presbyterianism, when the Interval was so extreme short, betwixt their Christning and Confirming. Pity it was they could not be trusted with their Christianity for One Night, and a little

little more, when they were actually arriv'd at Men's Estate ! But, I conjecture, it was judged the safest Way not to trust them too far. Whether all this does not look like meer Pageantry, I must leave all the World to judge : And which Way (by such a Scene as this) the Redeemer may be honoured, ignorant Souls inform'd of their Duty, Vital Holiness, and the Power of Godliness, can be furthered and promoted : And which Way Formality, Impiety, and Atheism should be suppressed, by such Practices, he must have better Eyes than mine who can see, or discern. Again,

4. It seem'd strange (and well it might) that no more Pains and Care was taken, to instruct these young Men in, and acquaint them with, the Nature, Ends, and Conditions of the Baptismal Covenant, or the Covenant of Christianity, and the Necessity of giving their cordial Consent to it, publicly, by a deliberate, serious, and personal taking hold of the Covenant for themselves ; and making a particular and open Confession, or Profession, of all this as in the Presence of God, and before many Witnesses : I say, if this had been done, as it ought to have been done, there would have been no Occasion for Undertakers. And Persons arriv'd at an adult State, if they had no Baptism before, were oblig'd to do this : What else have they the Use of their Reason, and Understanding for ? What are they instructed in the Elements, the Grounds, and Principles of Religion for ? Why else do they themselves personally appear, to take upon them the honourable Badge of their Profession ? Who knows but the next Managers, who shall be concern'd in a parallel Enterprize to what we have now before us, may a little more narrowly, and strictly,

strictly, consider all this, and save the Susceptors
some Charge and Labour?

Did I believe that any Person concern'd, and, consequently, who have most need of it, would survey this, I could tell them a little more that might do them good, if their Charity would but suffer it : And 'tis from the wholesome Advice which *Martin Bucer* gave our Reformers, even at a Time when they were modelling our *English Liturgy*, and other Things that concern'd the Hierarchy ; and whose Counsel was well taken then, and accepted, and I wish, and pray, it may have the like Success now. “ In his Book *de Regno Dei*, and others, he vehemently urges
“ the Necessity of Congregational Discipline,
“ and denying the Sacrament to the profane,
“ and unmeet ; of keeping baptized Youths
“ among the *Catechumens*, 'till, at Age, they
“ come to the true Understanding of the
“ Covenant, which they made, and must re-
“ new ; and 'till they give credible Signs of real
“ Godliness, by a godly Life. And of what
“ mischievous Effects it is to confirm them, and
“ admit them to the Lord's Supper, on their
“ bare saying the Words of the Catechism, the
“ Creeds, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue, with-
“ out tryed Understanding, and serious Piety :
“ and what a Wrong it is to the Christian Church
“ and Religion, to confound and corrupt our
“ Communion, for Want of due Discipline,
“ and Distinctions. And how little good all
“ Canons, and Laws for Reformation, or reli-
“ gious Duties, will do, if the Ministers them-
“ selves be ignorant, *drunken*, worldly, and un-
“ godly ; and the Churches be not taught by
“ able, godly, humble, self-denying, and loving,
“ Pastors.” This Advice needs none of my
Com-

Commendation, it will sufficiently commend it self: It once did some Good, and, I hope, it may do so again. Do Persons that are of Age devote themselves to God in Baptism? 'Tis proper, and requisite, that they know, and be appriz'd,

(1.) That Baptism is an honourable Badge of our Christian Profession, that hereby we own our selves to be *Christians*, and not *Heathens*, *Indians*, *Mahometans*, *Jews*, or *Infidels*, but *Christians*, professing and owning the Christian Religion, and that only; and endeavouring to come up to the Sacred Rules, and Precepts of it. That, as it was an Honour under the Law, to be called a *Jew*, *Behold thou art called a Jew, and makest thy Boast of the Law*, Rom. ii. 17. by this Denomination, and by Circumcision, they were distinguish'd from all other Nations under the Cope of Heaven; so our Baptism tells all the World what our Profession is, and that it is an Honour to be called, but much more to be, a Christian. The Disciples were first so call'd at *Antioch*. That as we have this Badge, we must be careful by no means to dishonour it; that as we are honour'd with this august Denomination, we may not be a Reproach and a Scandal to it; in Name *Christians*, in Nature *Ethiopians*; only pious in our Professions, and yet most wretchedly impious in our Conversations.

(2.) That it was intended to be the Laver of Regeneration: Not that all are savingly regenerated who are baptiz'd; no, 'tis plain with many a one, the Matter is quite otherwise: How many are born of Water, *in foro Ecclesiæ*, who are not born of the Spirit, *in foro Dei*? How many who make it too too evident, and apparent, by their corrupt Expressions, and ungodly Actions, that

that they are not yet washed from their Filthiness, Prov. xxx. 12. But to others it represents, and is an holy instituted Emblem of their New Birth, and Spiritual Renovation, of the *washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. iii. 5. And that when the external Ablution is attended, or followed, with an internal Regeneration, such will have abundant Reason to praise God for his undeserved Grace, the Spirit's Influence, and this holy Ordinance: whilst by Faith, and Prayer, and Hope, they are extracting the Benefit and Advantage of this Sacred Institution every Day.

(3.) That it is a Symbol of our Mortification, and so *we are* said to be baptiz'd into the Death of Christ, Gal. vi. 3. that as he died for Sin, *we* might die to it, being *buried with him by Baptism unto Death*; it seems to be a manifest Allusion to Immersion, or putting them under Water, a Custom they used in those hot Countries, though inconvenient for us in these colder Climates. So that Christians in Baptism do, as it were, go down with Christ, and descend unto his Grave, when they are baptized; leaving their Sin and Corruption, their carnal and sordid Affections there; and there they are buried, that they may emerge, and rise no more. Our Mortification is declared in our Redeemer's Crucifixion; seeing *our old Man is crucify'd with him, that henceforth we should not serve Sin*. When we are baptiz'd, but not mortify'd, we don't come up to the grand End and Design of our Baptism; in that Case it becomes an empty Name, a fruitless Sign, to us. If Sin live in us, even after Baptismal Water is sprinkled upon us, and we live and die under the Tyranny and Dominion of it, Baptism, in such a Case, will witness against us. I have read of
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one *Elphidophorus*, who revolted from the Orthodox to the *Arian Vandals*, that the Minister who baptized him, produced, and brought out, the Linnen Cloaths in which he was baptized, and laid them before him, saying, These shall witness against thy Perfidiousness and Treachery; and for thy just Perdition to all Eternity:

(4.) That we, and ours, are enrolled in Christ's honourable Family, and amongst the living Members of this sacred Fraternity and Corporation; and are, by this Enfranchisement, admitted to the discriminating Privilege of Adoption. Surely, it administers Matter of Joy and Gratulation, that we are *put among his Children, have a goodly Heritage, even of the Hosts of Nations*: That we are Retainers in his august House and Family; have our Names down amongst the Citizens and free Denizens of his spiritual *Jerusalem*: Surely 'tis something to have royal Provision made ready for us, and we invited to a Participation, *Whoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17. We being in this Family, by good Experience find, that this Water of Life is *not a Fountain sealed*, but a Fountain opened, and we at Liberty to refresh our selves with these healing Streams.

(5.) That we may be listed, as Soldiers, in Christ's Service, and under the Banner of this Captain of our Salvation. He is the Lord General, under whose Conduct and Command we fight, and war against our spiritual Enemies, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; persevering in this our Warfare, without fainting, or wavering, to our Lives End. Christians are called the Soldiers of the Lord Jesus expressly, *2 Tim. ii. 3: called to endure Hardness; to war a good Warfare; to put on the whole Armour of God; to stand their*

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Ground

Ground in an evil Day, when Enemies and Oppositions do encounter them with Rage and Violence ; to be valiant ; to quit themselves like Men ; to be strong. Whilst we live in the World, we must live in a militant State, but have no Reason at all to be dejected, or dispirited, whilst the Son of God is our Captain, whilst Faith is our Shield, the Word of God our Sword, Heaven, and inaccessible Glory, our sure Reward. Christians are commanded *to fight the good Fight of Faith, to lay hold on eternal Life,* 1 Tim. vi. 12. intimating, that it's a vain and imprudent Option, to expect an Interest in the latter, without enduring the Fatigues of the other.

(6.) That Baptism is the Broad Seal of God's Holy Covenant, wherein he most graciously promises, That he will please to be our God and Father, and that we shall be the Sons and Daughters of the Lord Almighty ; as Circumcision *was a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith,* Rom. iv. 11. of that Righteousness which Faith did entitle *Abraham* unto, and all his believing Seed and Progeny : That the Blessings, Benefits, and Promises of this Covenant, are assign'd, and made over to actual Believers, and to their Seed, conditionally, upon Condition that they take hold of the Covenant for themselves, personally, when they are of Age, and in a Capacity to do it.

Now 'tis plain, from Holy Scripture, that these are the great Ends of Baptism : And 'tis as plain that Persons who come to be of Age before they are baptized, ought to have been acquainted with them, instructed in them, and should have made some public Confession, before the Congregation, that they did understand and believe them, and would (through Divine Assistance)

sistance) in the Course of their Lives, endeavour to come up unto them ; owning that they were intelligent Consenters to God's Holy Covenant. Baptism was instituted for these great, noble, holy, and salutary Ends ; but there are other Ends, for which it never was instituted and ordained. Particularly,

[1.] Not to be entirely ingross'd and monopoliz'd by Christians of one Denomination, to the total Exclusion of others, as sound and orthodox as they themselves ; for, in this Sense, there is *but One God, One Faith, One Baptism* ; One Baptism belongs unto them all, so long as they hold the Foundation, and do not evert, and overturn that. For why should we endeavour to cast those out of Christ's House, out of His Covenant, and from all saving Benefit by this Sacrament, for whom Christ died ; merely because in every unnecessary Punctilio, they don't hit our Humour ? Did the Redeemer ever give any mortal Man Power to make, or impose, such Terms of Communion ? Shall I turn a poor Orphan, and fatherless Child, out of Doors, force him from his own Inheritance, and to beg his Bread among Strangers, only because he does not wear Clothes of the same Shape, Fashion, and Colour, that I do ? Shall I first cast him out, and then hate him most implacably, and irreconcilably, when I have done ? The Apostle tells us, that such as are weak in the Faith we must receive within our Charity, and *our Communion, but not to doubtful Disputations.*

[2.] It was never instituted, or ordain'd, to be an Engine to cut in Pieces, and nullify the Orders, and Authority, of Gospel Ministers ; who have as good a Commission, and as authentic Credentials to shew for that Commission, from

the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Head and King of his Church, to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and exercise holy Discipline in his Church, as any in the World ; who stand upon a Foundation truly evangelical, and upon the same Level with the Ministers of the best reformed Churches in the Christian World ; and who have sufficient Reason to believe that the very Manner, and Circumstances, of their Ordinations, are preferable to, and more regular than, that of their Opposers. The Arguments which support and evince this, may be consider'd in due Time. In the mean Time let it be remember'd, That it's a vile Prostitution, and Prophanation, of an holy Ordinance, for any to make Use of it, as an Instrument, to vilify their Brethrens Administrations, and impose upon the gross Ignorance and Credulity of the vulgar.

[3] This Sacrament was never instituted with a Design to be repeated, and reiterated when once celebrated by a Minister of the Gospel ; and when no just Occasion can be proved, nor scarcely pretended ; and when 'tis pretty plain that the Exaltation of a certain Set of Men above their Brethren, and the Applause of the common Sort of People, is, and must needs be, the only Thing in View : Else, what an Appearance can an Action have that does (as it were) tell God to his very Face, that, That was never done, which was done, and before Hundreds of Witnesses too ; that Persons solemnly, and publickly baptiz'd with Water, in the Name of the Sacred Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with Prayer antecedent and consequent, for a Blessing upon the whole Administration, and upon every Part thereof ; I say, by the unnecessary Repetition of it, to tell the Almighty that such were never baptiz'd
at

at all, is such a Piece of Boldness as no Man of Seriousness, and Piety would ever be guilty of; Nay, such as Ministers and Christians of a primitive and genuine Stamp, would be ashamed of. I shall not pretend to any profound Skill in Antiquity (neither, if I did, would I lay much of the Weight of this Controversy upon it) yet, for once, let me advance a Quotation of St. Cyprian, *de Ablutione*, as taken by the Reverend Mr. Walker, a learned Presbyter of the Church of England. The Words are,

“ The Rules of the Church for-	Et semel san-
“ bid Baptism to be repeated; and	ctificatis, nul-
“ to them that have once been san-	la deinceps
“ ctify'd (<i>i. e.</i> baptiz'd) let no Hand	manus iterum
“ presume to come and baptize	consecrans
“ them over again, or consecrate	presumat ac-
“ them over again.” And besides,	cedere.

supposing there had been some Irregularities in our Administrations, they may not, therefore, become Nullities. Our modern Re-Baptists, I believe, won't so much as pretend to be without Error, and Sin, but own themselves guilty of some Weaknesses and Imperfections: Will it, therefore, follow, that their Administrations are null and void? I fear, in this Matter, each Side must grant unto the other some Grains of Allowance,

Veniam dabimus, petimusq; vicissim.

This last, say our Adversaries, we grant you; but then there is an essential Qualification wanting in your dissenting Presbyters, Teachers, and Administrators; they have no regular, valid, or unquestionable Ordination; they are no Ministers, but most rude, and daring Usurpers of that sacred

sacred Function ; no other than meer Lay-men, fit for nothing but to be ranked amongst the Herd, *amongst the Beasts of the People.*

To which I crave Leave to put in the ensuing Answer.

(1.) This is *gratis dictum*, spoken without any Proof, or Evidence ; and, If it were sufficient for some to accuse, how could any, or others, be innocent ? I hope the World is a little wiser at this Day (as foolish as it is) than to take all upon Trust from some Men, without any Trial, or Scrutiny : And though the Ambition of any should incline them to set up for infallible Oracles, yet the Arguments which support the Validity of our Ordination, and Ministry, from Scripture, Reason, and the best Antiquity, the World must be Judge of. We crave no other Favour from such as scornfully trample upon us, than a full and fair Hearing of our Cause, and an impartial Consideration of the *Mediums* that support it.

(2.) The Validity of Presbyterian Ordination has been so copiously, and clearly, vindicated already, even to the Conviction of so many learned, and sober Men (both Ministers and People) in the Establish'd Church, who, could they but get themselves a little disburthen'd of Bigotry and Prejudice, that it would favour of Arrogance in me, so much as to pretend to add any Thing to the Arguments they have advanc'd upon this Head. Which Arguments stand in their full Strength, notwithstanding all the violent Assaults that have been made to weaken and extinguish them.

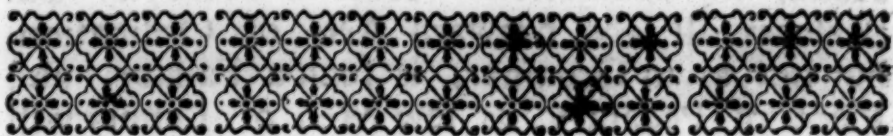
I hope it will be no Offence to any, if a few Arguments be hinted at here, for the Satisfaction of those who have neither consulted nor consider'd the other. These are taken, I. From

I. From the Establish'd Church it self, or some eminent, and judicious Members of it.

II. From Sacred Scripture, or the most Holy Word of God.

III. From Reason and Example.

IV. From particular and singular Instances, which serve to illustrate and corroborate the whole; and prove the Affirmation, That our Ordinations and Administrations are valid.



SECTION I.

THE first Reason is taken from the Establish'd Church it self.

T I. From the usual Practice of her own Ordainers.

2. From the free Concessions of the most eminent, and judicious, of her Members.

3. From her own Rubrick, and the Use which the present Clergy make of it.

That the Ordinations of Presbyters are valid, and, consequently, their Baptism, and other Administrations, appears from the usual Practice of Ordainers in the Church of *England*, who admit meer Presbyters to join with them in Imposition of Hands, when *Sacred Orders* are conferr'd upon a Candidate.

The Bishop takes a Dean, Prebend, Parson, &c. or other Presbyter, to join with him in the Ordaining Act: Therefore Presbyters have Power
to

to ordain. For an Ordaining Act must needs presuppose and involve an antecedent, inherent, Power of ordaining.

That Imposition of Hands is an Ordaining Act, I hope, no Man of Sense and Reading will have the Front to deny : If any do, I am confident his Mistake will soon appear, if he will but turn his Eyes to, *1 Tim. v. 22. Lay Hands suddenly on no Man* : The general Current of Interpreters understand this of Imposition, or laying on of Hands in Ordination. How a Presbyter can perform all the outward Acts of Ordination, but not as an Ordainer, is such a Fallacy, and Piece of Pedantry, as few Men of Letters will be ready to own.

To all this it will soon be reply'd, 'Tis true, Presbyters do impose Hands, with the Bishop, in Ordination ; but 'tis only by Way of Suffrage, and Consent to the Bishop's Act, and from no inherent Power. I answer,

(1.) *Ordinis est ordinare* ; he that is in Orders may confer Orders : This is a Maxim which Arch-Bishop *Usher* mention'd, and would have maintain'd : Now Presbyters are in Orders, therefore may confer them. Were it not a strange, and a Kind of prodigious Thing, that a Presbyter should be such an anomolous Creature, as to have no Seed in himself, whereby to propagate his kind ? One would wonder, if Matters were so with him, that his Order were not extinct long before this Day !

(2.) A Presbyter needed not to lay on Hands as a Token of his Consent to the Bishop's Act ; for this he might do well enough by a bare *Amen*, without any Thing more, to the Ordination Prayer.

(3.) Let

(3.) Let it appear that any Text of Scripture, in the whole Bible, can be produced to prove, that Presbyters are directed only to give their Consent in Ordination, by Imposition of Hands: Let any that are forward enough make the most curious Search, and, I am ready to believe, they'll soon find themselves miserably disappointed.

(4.) Dr. Cave, for whom, I know, some have a great Veneration, is of Opinion, "That Imposition of Hands was used as a Rite of conferring Ordination upon the Ministers of Christ." *Prim. Christ. p. 159.*

From the whole, 'tis evident, That meer Presbyters have the Right of imposing Hands in Ordination, even in the Church of *England*; and if there, then sure in other Reformed Churches too. Oh no, say sundry of our Brethren, but they have no such Right and Power separately from, but only in Conjunction with, the Bishop: We deny the Consequence. If you grant an inherent Power in Presbyters to ordain, 'tis the main Point we are now proving, or pleading for; and whether this meer Presbyter ordain separately, or conjunctly; in *England*, or *Scotland*; in our own, or in foreign Reformed Churches; all these Circumstances will not much alter the Case.

II. The Clearness of this Point appears from the free and ingenuous Concessions of the most eminent and judicious Members of the Establish'd Church. An Enumeration of all Particulars, and Instances, which might be produc'd, would perfectly tire the Reader; but take a select Number of them, in the following Order: If I prove guilty of any Misquotations, I shall be glad to be rectify'd, and shall most readily acknowledge my Mistake and Error.

D

Dr.

Dr. Cranmer, Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, being required to give in his Answer to this Question, Whether Bishops, or Priests (Presbyters) were first? makes this Reply, viz. "Bishops and Priests were at One Time, and were not Two Things, but both One Office in the Beginning of Christ's Religion."

Dr. Robertson, in Answer to the same Question, says, "*Nec opinor absurdum esse, ut sacerdos episcopum consecret.*" Nor do I think it absurd at all that the Priest consecrate the Bishop. *Burnet's Records, Vol. I. p. 223, 224.*

Spotswood's History of the Church of Scotland, hints, "That when they were setting up Episcopacy in that Kingdom; and several nominated were to be consecrated, it was objected, That it was necessary that they should be first ordained Presbyters, because they had not episcopal Ordination, but only from the Hands of meer Presbyters they received their Orders. But Dr. Bancroft (though a High-Church-Man) made Answer, There was no Occasion for such a Re-iteration; they must either account the Ordinations by Presbyters valid: or else condemn and unchurch the Reformed Churches in Transmarine Parts." Such a Concession as this, from so warm an Adversary, in such a Point, at such a Time, and when doing such Work, and back'd with such a Reason, one might reasonably hope would help to clear the Matter now in Debate.

Bishop Carleton has these Words, in his Treatise of Jurisdiction, p. 7. "The Power of Order, by all Writers that I can see, even of the Church of Rome, is understood to be immediately from Christ, given to all Bishops and Priests alike, by their Consecration."

The

The aforesaid Dr. *Usher*, Lord Primate of *Ireland*, told King *Charles* the First, in the *Isle of Wight* (and said he could fully prove it, beyond Contradiction, out of *St. Hierom*) "That for many Years together the Presbyters of *Alexandria* ordain'd, and consecrated their own Bishops." And to this Day, even at *Rome*, the Cardinals consecrate and ordain the Pope; here in *England*, the Bishops consecrate the Archbishop; an inferior Order consecrates a superior (as they deem it) in both Hierarchies. Pray, then, how happens it that Men of the same Order may not confer what they have, even the Power of Priesthood, or Presbyterate? Is there not more Reason for this, than for the other? Have Inferiors more Power than Equals? Had Presbyters once a Power they have now lost? How came they to forfeit their Charter, and in what Century? 'Tis like some Body or other will rub his Forehead and tell me.

Lastly, to add no more Authorities of this Nature, the pious, learned, and renowned Dr. *Burnet*, late Bishop of *Sarum*, in his Preface to the Third Volume of the History of the Reformation, p. 12. "laments that many who profess great Zeal for the Legal Establishment, yet seem to be set on forming a new Scheme, both of Religion and Government; and are taking the very same Methods, only a little diversify'd, that have been pursu'd in Popery, to bring the World into a blind Obedience to, and Dependance upon the Clergy; and to draw the Wealth, and Strength of the Nation into their Hands.

"The Opinion of the Sacrament's being an Expiatory Sacrifice; and of the Necessity of Secret Confession, and Absolution; and of

“ the Church’s Authority, acting in an Inde-
 “ pendence on the Civil Powers, were the Foun-
 “ dations of Popery, and the seminal Principles
 “ out of which that Mass of Corruption was
 “ form’d. They have no Colour for them in
 “ the New Testament, nor in the first Ages of
 “ Christianity ; and are directly contrary to all
 “ the Principles on which the Reformation was
 “ carried on, and to every Step that was made
 “ in the whole Progress of that Work. And
 “ yet these, of late, have been Notions much
 “ favour’d, and written for with much Zeal,
 “ not to say Indecency. Besides a vast Number
 “ of little superstitious Practices, that in some
 “ Places have grown to a great Height ; so that
 “ we were insensibly going off from the Re-
 “ formation, and framing a new Model of a
 “ Church, totally different from all our former
 “ Principles, as well as present Establishment.
 “ To all which they have added that singular
 “ and extravagant Conceit, of the *Invalidity*
 “ of *Baptism*, unless minister’d by One episco-
 “ pally ordain’d ; though this not only cuts off
 “ all Communion with the foreign Protestant
 “ Churches, of which, perhaps, they make
 “ no great Account ; but makes Doubtings to
 “ arise, with Relation to great Numbers both
 “ among our selves, and in the *Roman Com-*
 “ *munion.*”

Now if all this be not a Vindication of our
 Cause, it had very ill *Luck* to be so like it : What
 must the poor Dissenters do, what must they be-
 lieve in this Case ? Here are as great Lights as
 ever appear’d in our *English Horizon* ; as ever
 shin’d in our *British Orb*, asserting, and affirming
 the Identity of a Primitive Bishop, and Presby-
 ter, in Regard of Office, and Order : Pleading

for their Ordaining Power, for the Validity of their Ordinations, and Administrations; lamenting the declining of several of their Brethren of the legal Establishment, from the Principles of the Reformation, and their Fondness of little superstitious Fopperies; lamenting the extravagant Conceit that some Men have been lately forming and framing, concerning the Invalidity of Baptism, unless minister'd by One episcopally ordain'd, and looking most sadly, and dismally, upon the Consequences of such odd, novel, and uncharitable Notions, Practices, and Actions, both with Respect to our selves, and the Reformed Churches abroad. Were not most, or all of these Members of the Establish'd Church; many of them Dignitaries in it? Were they not capable of as fair Advantages to know the Truth, in this Matter and Affair, as others who are confessedly of a more diminutive and puiſne Stature, but certainly of less Learning and Charity? Did we err in this Point (as we believe we do not) you see we have admirable good Company. And whilst the soundest, most pious, and venerable Part of the Church of *England* plead for us, we shan't lay it much to Heart, though the Relicts, and Remainder set themselves against us.

III. The Validity of Presbyterian Ordination, and Baptism, has a solemn Confirmation from the Church of *England's* Rules and Rubrics, in her Liturgy, together with the Use the present Clergy make of it.

Immediately antecedent to the Office for Burials you have this Charge and Order, which (I am of Opinion) the very poorest Curate among them will own himself oblig'd to observe, viz. "That it shall not be read over Self-Murderers, the Excommunicate, or Unbaptiz'd." Now upon my

my own Knowledge and Experience, I can aver, That many Children, and Persons grown up, who have had no other Baptism than from the Hands of a Presbyterian Minister, have died, and been interr'd at the Parish-Church of *Bury*, at which Interments the Parson, or the Curate, have read the said Office over them, as usual, without any apparent Objection, Scruple, or Hesitation, especially when a Funeral Sermon, a Mourning Hatband, or a little *White* have attended the Solemnity. The said Children, &c. thus read over, were either baptiz'd, or unbaptiz'd; I don't believe that any of the Clergy hold a middle State. If baptiz'd, then Presbyterian Ordination is good, even according to their own Notion; and their Baptisms are valid, and not to be repeated, when the Readers, or any other, are in a more testy Humour. If unbaptiz'd (as it seems they say at other Times) then none of the Clergy ought to have read over them, for their doing it is a most notorious Violation of their own Rule, and Order; and renders them liable to the Censure of their Superiors. Besides, What will become of their own Subscriptions and Obligations, to observe all Things in the Book of Common Prayer, with other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church contained therein? What? Are these Things to be jested with, to be kept, or broken, as our Genius, or our Interest leads us? May Oaths and Subscriptions be dispensed with upon every little Occasion? May Rules, and Ecclesiastical Orders be snapt asunder, as fast as we nip Straws, and no Censure incurred? Must the poor Non-Cons be threatned, and harassed, and presented, when no Law is transgressed, no Fault committed, when nothing is or can be proved? And must the greatest Pretenders

ders to Decency and Order, be indulg'd in such Kind of Violations, and no Notice taken of it? I must needs say, I find the old Proverb a true one, *Some People had better steal a Horse, than others look over the Hedge.*

'Tis probable, some will say they put the most favourable, and charitable Construction upon People's Conditions at the Grave. Why, truly, better late than never; I wish we had more Charity amongst us. But why so much now and so little at other Times? Why is Presbyterian Baptism good at and after a Man's Death, and yet null and void, all the Time of a Man's Life? How can there be *sure and certain Hope of a Resurrection to Eternal Life* if he neither be baptiz'd, nor a Christian; if he be neither in the Church of Christ, nor within the Covenant of Grace; and, moreover, die under the Guilt of a damnable Schism? Pray, what must this *sure and certain Hope* be grounded upon? Have we any Foundation for such Hope, but only Christianity, when we have the Gospel amongst us? Upon the whole, I cannot but observe, That Truth, like a Dye, always falls upon a Square: Turn it which Way you will, it always lies firm, and sure, and will quadrate with any other Truth that falls near it; but where there are manifold Inconsistencies, and Incoherencies (and we don't need to go far to find them) there must needs be some Variation from it.

However, taking it for granted that the Practice aforesaid does suppose Persons so buried, baptized; and it must suppose that primarily, if it signify any Thing; then my Conclusion is as good as such a Practice can make it; namely, That the Ordinations, and Administrations

nistrations of meer Presbyters appear to be good and valid, from the Rubric of the Establish'd Church; and from the Use which the Clergy make of it.



SECTION II.

THE Proof already produc'd is only collateral, or, as we say, *Argumentum ad Hominem*. And, lest any should alledge, that all this while I have only been begging the Question, but directly proving nothing, I see 'tis high Time to advance to the

Second Topic, or Head of Argument, taken from the Sacred Scriptures, or the Holy Word of God. Now this is the principal, and most impregnable Foundation; if our Doctrine, Authority, and Mission, be built upon this Foundation, Men cannot overthrow it; if they so much as attempt and enterprize it, they will be found fighting against God, who will be too hard for such daring Aggressors. But if they be not built on this Foundation, all will come to nought, and the Superstructure come tumbling down; for *Magna est Veritas, & prævalebit*; Truth is great, and will prevail. *Stat Veritas sempiterna*, Eternal Truth will never fall.

ARGU.

ARGUMENT I.

Those who have the Government, and ordering of the Church committed to them, are invested with an Ordaining Power : But Presbyters have so. I strongly presume it will not be deny'd, that the Power of Ordination appertains to the well governing and ordering of the Church, and, therefore, shall spend no Time upon the Proof of this Part of the Argument ; the main Stress lies upon the other, Whether Presbyters have the Government and Ordering of the Church of Christ committed to them. St. Paul, that Great Apostle, directed in this Matter by the infallible Spirit of God, is my Voucher, who calls for the Elders, or Presbyters, of the Church of *Ephesus*, to meet him at *Miletus*, and there gives them a Charge ; *πέμψας εἰς Ἐφεσον, μετακαλῶσατο τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας.* *Missis nunciis Ephesum, accersivit presbyteros ecclesiae.* As the Great Apostle sends for these *Ephesian* Presbyters, so he has something of Weight, and Moment to commit to them, and concredit with them, *Acts xx. 28.* [*Take heed therefore to your selves ;*] mind the Concerns of your own Souls ; otherwise it cannot be hoped that you'll be cordially, and sincerely careful of the Salvation of others ; let your Conversations be regular and evangelical, [*And to all the Flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers :*] Take the Charge of the Souls of your Flock, govern them, rule them, feed them with sound Doctrine, and salutary Truths. You are invested with Power from the Holy Ghost, for the ordering of the Church of God in Worship, and Discipline, according to his Word and Will. And again, *Verse 31.* [*Therefore*
E
watch

watch and remember, &c.] stand upon your Guard, oppose Errors, Heresies, and spiritual Enemies ; be vigilant Pastors ; watch as those that must give an Account. Here,

(1.) The Charge is very solemn, awful, and affecting.

(2.) Given by the special Intimation and Direction of the Holy Ghost ; *the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers.*

(3.) Given to Presbyters, and not to a superior Order [*both made you Overseers ;*] he is still speaking to the same Men, to the same Individuals.

(4.) It comprehends the several and respective Parts of the Pastoral Office, teaching, feeding, ruling, and governing, including the Power of ordaining.

(5.) The Apostle St. Paul did not afterwards change their Presbyterial into a Prelatical Power, as some have groundlessly suggested, and insinuated. For we don't read that ever he return'd again to them, after he had pray'd, and parted with them upon the Shore ; nay, he told them, *ver. 20, 38. That they should see his Face no more ;* so that there was no Alteration in their Office, and his Charge.

(6.) Nor do we read that he set any of these Presbyters in a higher Post, superior to the rest ; but gave the Charge, Power, and Caution, equally to them all.

ARGUMENT II.

If primitive Presbyters and Bishops be one and the same Office, then Presbyters have an Ordaining Power. The Reason of the Consequence is, because it's granted on all Hands that
Scripture-

Scripture-Bishops have ; therefore, if Presbyters be such, they must needs have this Power too : Inasmuch as one and the same Office falls under different Names, and the very same Persons called Presbyters, *Acts* xx 17. are called Bishops [*Επισκόπος*] *ver.* 28. without any Mutation of the Person. The Office, and Order the same, and Person the same, though different Names. An Identity of Person and Function, though Variety of Denominations ; called Bishops, Presbyters, Elders, Pastors, Ministers, &c. This is further ratify'd and confirm'd from *Titus* i. 5. *For this Cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain Presbyters in every City.* *Ver.* 7. *For a Bishop must be blameless.* Now what Sense, or Coherence, can there be in these Verses, if Bishop in the 7th Verse, be not the same with Presbyter in the 5th Verse. 'Tis as plain as Words can make it, that the Holy Apostle is describing the Qualifications of those that *Titus* did ordain in *Crete*, sometimes called Presbyters, or Elders, and sometimes Bishops ; telling Persons in the very same Office, invested with the same Authority and Power, how they were to deport and behave themselves towards God, their Hearers, their own Souls, and them that were without. Hence it follows, 1. That Presbyters are Scripture-Bishops. 2. Consequently have a Commission from Jesus Christ, to feed, rule, govern, and order the Church of *the Living God*. And, 3. No Qualification of a Bishop is here mention'd as distinct from Presbyters ; much less a separating and dividing the Office, and giving the Presbyter only a Part, excluding him from the Power of ordaining, confirming, consecrating, and the like. Such a Partition of the Power was not then known.

ARGUMENT III.

If Examples can be given of Presbyters ordaining in the New Testament, then they have that Power; but such Examples may be given. The Consequent of the Proposition is self-evident, and irrefragable; for *Nil dat, quod non habet*, nothing gives what it has not. They must have Power to ordain, else they could not ordain; *Quicquid est in actu, prius fuit in potentia*, what is now in the Act, and Effect, was once in the Cause, and the Power.

It now remains that the Instances promised be produced: And, I hope, this will immediately be done to a plenary Satisfaction.

The first Instance is of *Paul and Barnabas's* being ordain'd by certain Prophets and Teachers; the Place is obvious, *Acts* xiii. 1, 2, 3. Now there were in the Church that was at Antioch, certain Prophets, and Teachers.—And as they ministred to the Lord—The Holy Ghost said, Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul, for the Work whereunto I have called them: And when they had fasted, and prayed, and laid their Hands on them, they sent them away. It may be enquir'd what sort of Officers in the Church these Prophets and Teachers were? inasmuch as some have very confidently affirmed, That Prophets were Presidents in this Ordination, and Teachers their Inferiors. But let it be remember'd that they were.

(1.) Standing Officers in the Church of *Antioch*; or, at least, had been there for some Time.

(2.) We read of no Prelacy, Presidency, or Superiority, among them; nor (we think) is it in the Power of any to prove it; either from this Place

Place now quoted, or from any other in the whole New Testament.

(3.) The general Stream of Interpreters, not excepting those of our Opposers, ingenuously grant that these Prophets and Teachers were Presbyters ; but say, they had an extraordinary Commission, for this particular Ordination, because of the planting of Churches, and the spreading and disseminating of Christianity. But let it be consider'd here, that though Prophets, in Strictness of Speech, signify such as predict and foretel future Events ; yet it frequently imports no more than such as interpret the Scripture, and preach ; but did not constitute a distinct Order of Men, separate from such as did so. Moreover, 'tis granted, there was something extraordinary that did attend the Administrations of these Primo-primitive Times, in Order to the Plantation and Settling of evangelical Churches ; such as Gifts of Tongues, Prophecy, Miracles, &c. but what was transacted in this Affair proceeded (no doubt) from their ordinary Power, and which they might exert upon other Occasions. But this is not all,

(4.) Here was Fasting, Prayer, and Imposition of Hands, the usual Rites and Concomitants of Ordinations, as all grant and allow ; and if the Ordination of *Paul* and *Barnabas* was valid, when done by Presbyters ; if the Holy Ghost did order, warrant, and command the setting apart of these Two Persons, to perform the Duties of their holy Function, who need question the Power of Presbyters to ordain ?

The Second Instance is of *Timothy*, who was ordain'd by the Hands of the Presbytery, 1 Tim. iv. 14. *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands*

Hands of the Presbytery: A Place so full, so plain, so pertinent to our Purpose, that it will remain as a perpetual and indelible Record against the malicious and impotent Efforts of such as deny and nullify Presbyterian Ordination. It would have been a matter of Triumph, had the Expression been as plain and full for the other kind of Ordination. Let it be remarked,

[1.] Here is *Timothy*, a Person well qualified for the Work and Office of an Evangelist ordain'd: He was a Candidate eminent for his Faith, Piety, Diligence, Abstemiousness, and Temperance.

[2.] Here is a whole College of Presbyters conven'd to ordain him, which they do by imposition of Hands in a most solemn Manner; and which they would not have done, nor ought to have done, had there not been an inherent Power in Presbyters, as such, to ordain; which is the only thing upon this Head which we contend for. Can we imagine that they came together on this Occasion without Direction, without Commission, or were guilty of Usurpation? Let us see who'll be so hardy as to attempt the proving any of these upon the Presbyters that ordain'd *Timothy*.

[3.] The Gift that was in *Timothy* was conferr'd this way, and the Ministry is called a Gift; *Unto me that am less than the least of all Saints is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ*, says the Apostle *Paul*.

[4.] The great Apostle of the Gentiles himself, testifies that this Gift was given by the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery; and can we have a more Authentic Voucher? Who is it that will question his Intelligence, Authority, or Fidelity

Fidelity in this Narration? Can we get any better? Shou'd we desire any other? Aye but I'm appriz'd, and very well aware, that some will be ready to tell me, I crow before Day; for don't we read, 2 Tim. i. 6. *Stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my Hands.* Here is the Apostle imposing Hands on Timothy, as well as the Presbytery. Answer, The Solution will have no great difficulty in it, if it be maturely consider'd.

1.) That the Holy Ghost was sometimes given by the laying on of Hands. *They laid their hands on them, and they receiv'd the Holy Ghost, Acts viii. 17, 18.* and who knows whether any thing more than this was intended?

2.) If Presbyters laid on Hands with the Apostle, this Imposition, and their ordaining Power is so much the more confirm'd by his Presence, who would have reprov'd 'em if there had been any thing presumptive or irregular in it; their inherent Power of Ordaining, whether with, or without the Apostle, in his Presence, or in his Absence, is as much as we plead for.

3.) If the Apostle did lay on his Hands with the Presbyters, what is this to the diminishing or lessening of the Power of Presbyters; or the elevating of Diocesan Bishops above 'em? This will no way in the World alter the state of our Case, nor enervate the Reasons and Arguments that support it. For,

(1. Diocesan Bishops, as such, are not, nor can properly be the Successors of the Apostles. A Bishop has a fix'd Place, District, Diocess; his Jurisdiction is limited, confin'd within such a certain Compass or Circuit; but the Apostles were not so limited or confin'd, but

Apostoli fuerunt Pastores universales. Paræ. in Rom. p. 1252.

but went to several Provinces, Cities, Countries, Nations; herein then Diocesan Bishops cannot be the Successors of the Apostles, there is no Parity in this respect betwixt their Commissions and Jurisdictions.

(2. There was some Power which the Apostles had which was peculiar to themselves, and which determin'd and ended with 'em: few will be so arrogant as to claim it. Something Apostolical which their Work requir'd, which in succeeding Ages ceas'd: nor was it necessary to be continued, when the Reasons of it were ceas'd.

(3. But Presbyters are more likely to be Successors of the Apostles in the ordinary and standing part of their Office; which Office for the ruling, governing, and Pastoral feeding of the Church, was to continue, and remain to the end of the World: Oh! may some say, that's a bold Word; but if it be as true as bold, we are right enough still. Are not some of the Apostles call'd Presbyters, nay, do they not give themselves this Appellation? Now let any Man prove, and make plain in what part of the Bible the Holy Apostles call themselves Bishops or Diocesans, *et erit mihi magnus Apollo*. I'll warrant him he may set up for a NONE-SUCH. To evidence that the Apostles call'd themselves Presbyters, I have a *Duumvirate* ready, St. Peter and St. John; and one would hope that by the Mouth of two such Witnesses the matter would, beyond contradiction, be establish'd. I begin with

St. Peter, who calls himself a Presbyter, 1 Pet. v. 1. *The Elders that are among you I exhort who also am an Elder.* Πρεσβυτέρους τὸς ἐν ὑμῖν παρεχόμεν ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος. I humbly conceive this is Demonstration, and gives some umbrage and ground to believe, that when the Apostolical Office, as
purely

purely Apostolical, and Extraordinary, was rescinded, the Governing Power of Presbyters succeeded, and was continued even as at this Day. Had the Apostle said, the Bishops or Diocesans that are among you I exhort, who am a Bishop or Diocesan, there would have been some matter for Joy and Triumph; but seeing it is as it is, we may easily see to what side the advantage of Truth is like to fall. But least any should think that this Proof won't do without another, I have a second.

Saint John also calls himself a Presbyter twice over in the first Verses of his second and third Epistles, ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ, *The Presbyter to the Elect Lady*; and again, ὁ πρεσβύτερος τῷ ἀγαπῶντι, *The Presbyter to the Beloved Gains*. Here the Apostle falls under this Denomination, and under it, recommends himself and Doctrine to two Eminent Saints. If it be objected, that he gives himself this Title in regard of his Age; why may we not say, he assumes this Title in regard of his Office? and why may he not intend the latter as well as the former? and what if we say it includes both? the Sense of a Scripture is not to be narrowed without just Occasion.

ARGUMENT IV.

Those that may Preach, and Baptize, may also Ordain; but meer Presbyters may Preach and Baptize, — I presume the minor Proposition is granted, and needs no Confirmation; our Opposites Practice is sufficient to discover their Judgments and Opinions in this matter: the major then must needs be denied; and is thus prov'd. If Preaching, Baptizing, Ruling the

Flock, and Ordaining, be essential Parts, and Branches of the Pastoral Office, inseparable from it; then if a Presbyter can do the former, he may also do the other; if he can Preach and Baptize, he may also Ordain: if the Ordainer express a contrary Intention, and would separate his Ruling and Ordaining Power, from his Preaching and Baptizing Power, and bereave him of it, either such an Intention in the Ordainer must be null and void, or the whole Action and Administration must be a nullity: what Christ has join'd together, no man may put asunder. Now that all these are inseparably united to the same Office and Order, seems very clear from the Charge St. Peter gives to the Elders or Presbyters scatter'd and dispers'd abroad throughout the Churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bitynia, 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 3. *The Elders that are among you I exhort, who also am an Elder, and a Witness of the Sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the Glory that shall be revealed: feed the Flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind. Neither as being Lords over God's Heritage, but being Ensamplers to the Flock.*

Let the following Elucidations be weigh'd in the Balance of an impartial Judgment.

(1.) The Persons to whom St. Peter gives this Charge, viz. The Presbyters of those scattered Churches consisting of converted Jews, and christianiz'd Gentiles. *The Elders that are among you I exhort.*

(2.) The Ruling and Guiding Power, as well as that of Preaching, Teaching, and Instructing, was committed to them, and concredited with them; and so much is evidently hinted at, and included in feeding the Flock of God which was
among

among them, taking the oversight thereof, being Ensamples to the Flock. When they are commanded to feed the Flock of God which was among 'em, they were commanded to Teach and Rule 'em; for feeding imports no less: should I multiply Authorities for the Proof of this Sense, and Signification of the Word, I might tire my self and my Reader; one or two may chance to convince those who think we want 'em. Grotius, because admired by some as an immortal Author, I shall put in the Front.

Pascite] i. e. *Regite*, ut apparet ex Matth. ii. 6. Sic Verbum Hebraicum *למנוח* etiam *Regibus* tribuitur,

Feed] i. e. *Rule*, as appears from Matth. ii. 6, For out of Bethlehem shall come a Governor that shall Rule my People Israel; the Hebrew Word so render'd is attributed unto Kings. And the same Author adds, *Hoc & Petro Christus praeceperat*, John xxi. 15, and this Christ commanded Peter, viz. *He said unto him, Feed my Lambs.*

Estim is another Author of great Learning and Ingenuity, who says, that *Ποιμαίνε* *Omnem Pastoris Curam, & Gubernationem comprehendit*: This word [*Feed*] contains and comprises the universal Care, and Government of a Pastor; and surely if all be comprehended in it, the Power of Ordaining cannot be excluded and left out of it. The Genus contains not only all the Species, but their several respective Individuals. *Vatablus* notes, that the Word *totum Episcopi Officium comprehendit*, comprehends the whole Office of a Bishop, and if an Ordaining Power belong to a Bishop, it comprehends that too; and by the Apostle himself in the Text, under present consideration, it is committed to the Presbyters of the Churches aforesaid; and if so, to the Presbyters of other Churches. *Quod erat Demonstrandum.*



SECTION III

I now accountable for the Arguments taken from Reason and Example; and I don't question but Reason has somewhat to say for a just, tho' a despised Cause, and will open its Mouth in the behalf of the Innocent, tho' never so much loaded with Disgrace and Obloquy.

I. Such Ordinations and Administrations as are good and valid in the Reformed Churches, are good Here: But Ordinations and Administrations are good in the Reformed Churches when done by Presbyters: *Ergo*. If the Consequence of the Proposition be deny'd upon this view, that we have not the like Necessity which they have; 'tis easily answer'd.

(1.) They might have Bishops if they had any mind to 'em; any desire of 'em; they might have so in *Holland*, *Geneva*, and many other places if they would, * nothing hinders but that they think themselves better without 'em,

* Bagenhagius Pomeranus, a Presbyter of Wittenburgh, ordain'd seven Superintendents in Denmark, upon the deposing of seven Bishops, before the King and Senate in the capital Church of Haffnia, *vid.* Melch. Ad. in vit. Bagenhag. p. 315.

and the Church better rul'd and govern'd by such Ministers as have no other than Presbyterian Ordination, and that herein they come nearer the Pattern in the Holy Gospel ; and who can blame 'em for acting according to the best of their Light, when they have the Word of God before 'em? *Paracelsus*, a learned Commentator, and Follower of the Reformers in *Germany*, in his Notes upon the *Romans*, attributes the Vocation and Mission of Pastors and Ministers unto the Presbytery, as his own Words * in the quoted Commentary will undeniably attest. Order requires that Pastors and Ministers be called, chosen, and sent from the Presbytery of the Church ; for from the same our Preachers are chosen, and called, That the Ordinations and Baptisms of foreign Reformed Churches are good, the foregoing Arguments declare ; the Church of *England* in her Canons, Liturgy, Prayers, and Letters, has owned over and over. Let Canon LV be consulted, in which you meet with this Passage, "Ye shall pray for Christ's Holy Catholic Church, that is, for the whole Congregation of Christian People throughout the whole World, and especially for the Churches of *England, Scotland, and Ireland.*" Now if the Reformed Churches abroad, and *Scotland*, have no Ministry, no Baptism among 'em, they can be no christian People, nor ought you to pray for 'em as such, nor shou'd the Canon call 'em so. I much fear some Censurers will find themselves in the Briars here, and must either burst the Ca-

* Ordo enim est ut Pastores eligantur, vocentur, et mittantur a Presbyterio Ecclesie ; ab hoc enim nostri Praecones eliguntur, & vocantur, p. 801.

non, and let down their Prayers, or own all they have been denying. This is a most pitiful Case, but I know not how it can be remedied by those who condemn themselves in those Things which they allow. But we have not done yet. It seems the University of Oxford has something to say in Vindication and Commendation of Reformed Churches, and particularly of the Church of Geneva; which, all know, has been strictly Presbyterian the most of an hundred and fifty Years.

In a Letter to Geneva, from that University, dated February 5, 1706. such Passages as these may be found. "Their Ministers are call'd most excellent Pastors; they are call'd dear Brethren in Christ; and that whereas the Church of Geneva has complain'd of some Aspersions cast upon them by the Church of England; they clear themselves of that Charge, by expressing a peculiar Respect for that Church; and wishing not only a friendly Correspondence with that Church, but also a strict Union with it, and all other foreign reformed Churches." What would any wish or desire more? This is far from the Run of denying Presbyterian Ordinations, Ministers, Sacraments, Christianity; denying them a Share in the Covenant of Grace; leaving them upon a Level with moral Heathens, and having no other Hopes of their Salvation than such as is founded upon the uncovenanted Mercy of God. Is not the Note, the Tune, sometimes strangely and unaccountably alter'd? Are there not unintelligible Mysteries in some Men's Tempers?

(2.) Well then, Distance of Place cannot alter an Institution, the Nature of an Office, or Function, which in Christ's Church is to continue

me without Variation to the End of the World. Ministerial Authority, as coming from Christ, the Head of Power and Influence to his Church, is the same in every Age and Nation, and varies not with Time, or Place. Nor has he given Power to any Man, or Men, upon Earth, to alter the Nature of it at their Pleasure; *His Kingdom is not of this World*; his Word must be the Standard, and not Men's Wills and groundless Humours, of our Reformations, Ordinations, and Administrations. *To the Law and to the Testimony, if they walk not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them, Isa. viii. 20.*

II. If our Ordinations are better than those in the Church of Rome, then they are good and valid; but they are preferable to those in the Church of Rome. The Consequence of the Antecedent is their own who contend with us, and their Practice is correspondent. If Priests, or others, ordain'd in the Church of Rome come over to the Church of England, they don't re-ordain them, nor question their Orders, but even take them as they find them. That the Ordinations of Presbyters, as amongst us, are preferable to *Romish* Orders, I hope the ensuing Particulars will evince.

(1.) The *Romish* Ordinations are into an idolatrous Church; or, if you please, into a *Synagogue of Satan*. The Homilies of the Church of England charge the Church of Rome with Idolatry, I believe, an hundred Times; and call her no better than an old, foul, filthy, ill favour'd, wither'd Harlot. Now that the Offspring of this filthy Harlot should be adopted, and taken in to the Church, and no Questions ask'd about their
Ordi-

Ordination; when the genuine and legitimate Sons of the Reformation are ejected, and accounted spurious, shows us plainly which Way the Game goes.

(2.) The Pope is wont to be esteem'd Antichrist, and the Church of Rome Antichristian. Let any one look into *Jewel's Apology*, and *Willet's Synopsis Papismi*, both Church of England Writers; and towards the Beginning of the Reformation too, in Queen *Elizabeth's* Time, and I shall not need to tell them what kind of a Creature the Pope was then thought to be. Dr. *Whitaker*, a famous Disputant, and an illustrious Star in the *English Church*, the Oracle of the University, and the Miracle of the World, has prov'd the Pope to be Antichrist, by invincible Arguments; and tho' *Bellarmino* was so hardy as to encounter him, yet he had presently enough of the Combat.

I am apt to think, that for all the fine Words that some are pleased to give Popery now a days, 'tis Popery still, and the present Pope as much Antichrist as any of his Predecessors. Are Orders deriv'd originally from the Pope, from Antichrist, from Christ's pretended Vicar General, from an Usurper upon Christ's Prerogative and Honour, good and valid; and ours that are agreeable to Scripture, and primitive Antiquity, forg'd and supposititious? Tell it not in Gath. It seems there is a Generation alive yet, who can strain at a Gnat, and swallow a Camel.

(3.) Remember what the Priests in the Church of Rome are ordained to, and the Matter in debate will be more clear: They are ordained to set up, consecrate, and adore a *Breaden God*; to uphold the Papal Hierarchy; to extirpate the Northern Heresy, or Protestant Religion; to observe the *Trental Articles*; to pray Souls out of Purgatory;

Purgatory, and to say Masses in Order to it. Is this Ordination good, and theirs naught, that's agreeable to Christ's Institution, conformable to Gospel Rule, and Canons? Is theirs naught who preach the Word powerfully, administer Sacraments regularly, and come as near a godly Discipline as they can? Which Discipline the Church of *England* every Year openly confess they want, in the Preface to the Communion.

(4.) Papal Power of Ordination is affirm'd, and pretended to be derived by Succession from the Apostles; and the main weight of all is laid upon this Bottom, upon this Foundation. But was this Succession ever prov'd to be without interruption? I say, was, or cou'd this be prov'd since, or long before the Reformation? What! was there no interruption when two or three Popes contended for the Chair for above forty Years together, and few, or none, could tell whose Right it was? was there no interruption when a Woman Pope snatch'd hold of the Keys? was there none, when some Popes were Blasphemers, Sodomites, Conjurers, Necromancers, enter'd into Covenant with, and sold their Souls to the Devil? Sorry should we be, if we had no better Arguments to prove our Ordinations by, than such a Succession, and the validity of Diocesan Ordinations will be sorely shaken if it have no better a Foundation: Let them look to that who venture All upon such a Hazard; if one Link in the whole Chain be broken, the Chain will be unserviceable ever after, and the Power drops past all recovery.

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III. Those

III. Those that are in Orders may confer Orders: But Presbyters are in Orders. The Assumption none will deny, yet they say, their Orders only extend to Preaching, administering Sacraments, visiting the Sick, and Prayer; but extend not to Ordination, Confirmation, and Excommunication. To which I answer, They have a Right of conferring such a Power as themselves have, for the whole Power of a Pastor goes together; and Christ has not left it in the Power of any Man to rescind what Parts he pleases. Arch-bishop *Usher* you have heard was of this Opinion. As to the former Proposition, now only in Question, we say, that if what some account an inferior, can consecrate a superior Order, much more an equal: If Bishops, can consecrate Arch-bishops; Cardinals, Popes; Presbyters, their own Bishops; (as the *Alexandrian's* did from the Days of *Mark* the Evangelist, to the Days of *Heraclas* and *Dionysius*) surely then Presbyters may ordain Presbyters: if they can do the Greater, they can do the Less, *à majori ad minus valet Consequentia*. Moreover, Physicians can make Physicians; Philosophers can make Philosophers; Divines can make Divines; and Generation can propagate the Species: and why Presbytery should be a dry Stock, a barren Plant, that by no means can propagate its Kind, when *omne sibi simile generat*, when every thing generates its like amongst Vegetables and Animals, this (I say) some will be hard set to account for. The Convocation can make Canons, and yet the greatest part of 'em are Presbyters, and every one excommunicated who shall deny it to be the Church of *England* by Representation.

IV. That

IV. That Ordination which is less censurable than that of Diocesans is good and valid ; but ours is less censurable : the Proposition needs no Proof, because our Opposers grant (you may be sure) their own to be good. To the other part of the Argument let it be observ'd,

(1.) We don't bind 'em by Oath to many disputable Canons that are most wretchedly broke, as the Instances before us make appear. Nor,

(2.) Do we impose any Terms of Communion which the Word of God is unacquainted with ; we don't bind and tye the Ordained to deny Baptism to those who scruple to take it with the Sign of the Cross ; we don't order 'em to deny the Lord's Supper to those who scruple to take it Kneeling ; but urge 'em only to insist upon such Terms of Communion as Christ and the Gospel have laid before 'em, judging those to be abundantly sufficient.

(3.) We don't plead for a Power deriv'd from *Rome* by an undisturb'd Succession, as if we must have no Ministry, Church, Administration, or Ordination without it ; but are assur'd there may be a notification of God's Mind and Will, that this or that Person shall be a Minister of Christ some other way.

(4.) We don't endeavour to rob Presbyters of the Power that Christ has given 'em, nor to maim their Office, or their Order, by lopping off some essential and considerable Branches of it ; nor do we offer to hinder 'em from ruling and governing the Flocks they teach, instruct, and admonish ; and as the Keys were given together, we don't withhold the Key of Discipline, after we have given them the Key of Doctrine.

(5.) We don't terrify those whom we ordain with threatnings of pecuniary Mulcts and Penalties, but endeavour to satisfy 'em of their Duties from the Holy Word of God; and believe all Ordinances, whereby Seals and Censures are administered, are sufficient for the obtaining their own Ends, without Fines, Confiscations, and Imprisonments; and as for Christ's Ordinances, *valeant quantum valere possunt*: nor can we think that Absolutions shou'd be purchas'd with Money, or that he who has the greatest Purse, should have the surest Pardon.

As for the Arguments that prove from Fathers, Councils, and the Ancients, the validity and regularity of Presbyterian Ordination, I shan't pretend to be a Critic in 'em; there's a sufficient enumeration of 'em in Mr. *James Owen's Plea for Scripture Ordination*, and Mr. *Boyse of Dublin*; which Arguments stand, and remain still in their full Force and Strength, notwithstanding any thing that the late *Rector of Bury* was able to do to enervate or shock 'em; and it wou'd have been the more charitable, ingenious, and methodical way for the present R——r to have taken, had he try'd his Skill in Antiquity, or otherways to have overturn'd them, and vindicated the Cause and Honour of his Predecessor, before he had countenanc'd the Rebaptization of three poor silly ignorant Persons at *Aitenfield* with his Presence, on purpose to nullify and run down Presbyterian Baptism and Ordination. If from Antiquity, the Ancient Fathers, and Councils, he'll please to attempt it, I'll undertake to get him a Reply of the like kind as soon as he can reasonably desire it. There's something yet behind.



SECTION IV.

AM. lastly, accountable for particular and singular Instances, which serve to corroborate and illustrate the whole, and still make it more clearly evident, that our Baptisms and other Administrations are good and valid, notwithstanding all the little odd Tricks and Artifices of some kind of Men. This appears,

(1.) From the Church of *England's* Communion. How many Thousands have been admitted to the Lord's Table in the Establish'd Church, who never had any other than Presbyterian Baptism? nor was it either repeated or so much as question'd, (for indeed 'tis not long since this fond and novel Opinion, this new Sect of Church Anabaptists, started up). The admittance of such without any Question ask'd, is so notoriously known, that it would but be lost labour to prove it. After, and in the Year 1660, how many such, all over the Nation, in every County, City, and Town, receiv'd the Communion with the Church of *England*, and yet had no other Baptism but from Presbyters ordain'd by meer Presbyters, during the Time of *Oliver Cromwell's* Usurpation? If all these must have been brought to the Font again, I fear some of 'em would have come unwillingly; the Clergy would have

have had much Work upon their Hands, and the Confusions and ill Consequences that would have arisen from it, would have been in a manner infinite. Had our New-Rebaptizers been then in Being, and People foolish enough to come under their Fingers, they would have needed no other Work for many Years. But to the Point.

If Presbyterian Baptism was good upon, and soon after King Charles the Second's Restoration, 'tis good still. If such were Christians then, how come they to be Heathens now? If they be qualify'd for the Communion this Way, both now, and then, why should it be repeated? Why are some qualify'd by this Kind of Baptism, others unqualify'd? Why are some Christians, others none? 'Tis like our Rebaptizers know: It were a little uncharitable in me to question their Ability to open and explain such a Riddle. "From the Beginning of Christianity to this Day, no Instance can be given of any who have been allow'd to partake of the Eucharist before they have been wash'd in the Laver of Regeneration: And in our English Liturgy, you will find this Rubric in one of her Public Offices; *There shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, till such Time as he be confirmed, or ready to be confirmed.* Now he that was never baptiz'd cannot be ready for Confirmation, much less for full Communion with the Church."

Either then our Presbyterian Baptism is a Validity, or some of our Clergy are herein guilty of an unpardonable Irregularity. Let them take which End they will, 'tis much if they don't find themselves pent up in a wrong Box.

(2.) This

(2.) This appears from the Church of *England's* Confirmations. When my Lords the Bishops first confirm'd in *England*, after the Restoration, and after that too when the Act of Uniformity was in Force, and the then establish'd Ministers ejected, how many that had no other Baptism than from such as had Ordination from meer Presbyters were confirm'd? And can we think that the Bishops that did so, did look upon them to be unbaptiz'd? How could they then confirm them? If I mistake not, in the Prayer which the Bishop offers to God at Confirmation, there is this Expression, "Almighty and Everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy Servants by Water, and the Holy Ghost, &c." Now what can be the Meaning of being regenerated by Water, and by the Holy Ghost, but being baptiz'd? And if so (as it can't be otherwise) I hope the inferior Clergy believe that their Lordships offer this Prayer to Almighty God in Faith, and in the Sincerity of their Hearts; and that they believe such, as well as others, baptiz'd, and regenerated by Water, and the Holy Spirit. Now if the Fathers of the Church think Presbyterian Baptism to be good, why should any of her Sons think otherwise? Shall a true Son of the Church presumptuously contradict the Judgment of his Father, and throw Dirt in the Face of his Mother? How shall I excuse for him, if I had never so good a Mind? When Sir *William Dawes*, then Lord Bishop of *Chester* (now Arch-Bishop of *York*) confirm'd at *Manchester*, a List (as I am inform'd from Eye-Witnesses) was presented to his Lordship, of some Children who were episcopally baptiz'd, and another List of others who had only Presbyterian Baptism; and 'twas mov'd to his Lord-

Lordship, that the latter might be re-baptiz'd, to qualify them for Confirmation; but he refus'd, declaring that there was no Need for it, gave his Reason for that Declaration, and immediately confirm'd them, without any Objection, or Hesitation. The Motion, I presume, was made by one Mr. *Mainwaring*, a late Curate at *Bury*. His Grace's Judgment was then fully known, and Persons in some doubt before, satisfy'd. But all this, and more, does not satisfy a few neighbouring Clergymen, of (pretended) greater Wisdom and Penetration. I hope they won't take a scriptural Irony ill, though I recite it on this Occasion, *Job* xii. 2. *No doubt but ye are the People, and Wisdom shall die with you.* I need not expound it.

(3.) This appears from the Church of England's Admissions to the Sacred Function of the Ministry. Some Candidates for the Ministry, who have been baptiz'd by Dissenting Ministers, and educated among them, both in public and private Academies, who have thought fit to conform to the Establish'd Church, her Canons, Ceremonies, Worship, and Discipline, have been episcopally ordain'd, yet their Baptism never reiterated. Now here our Novelists will be heartily gravell'd. Either their Baptism is valid, or invalid: If valid, what's disputed is fully granted, and so far we are right. And if it will do in them, it will much more do in others; nor should it be repeated, for says *Optatus*, *Baptism confers Grace, but if it be repeated it hazards the Life of the Soul.* Lib. 5. *

If

* Absit ut iteremus quod semel est, aut duplicemus quod unum est. *Optatus ad Parmenianum, de schismate Donatistarum.* Paris 1569. p. 54.

If the Baptism of such Ministers be invalid, then they are no Christians ; if no Christians, no Ministers ; if no Ministers, their Administrations are Nullities, and consequently all their Baptisms too ; if their Baptisms be Nullities, then what shall become of their Parishes that have no Baptism but from such unqualified Hands ? And what shall become of such in these Parishes that are educated for the Service of the Church's Altars, who have no better Baptism, and afterwards of all the Administrations of these also, and so on to the End of the Chapter, if it have any End ? But you see the absurd Consequences, and mischievous Tendencies of the Doctrine and Practices of our New Sectaries, which will bring us in this Nation in such a Labyrinth of Confusion, that it will be past all their Art and Power to help us out. What a Pond are we plung'd into now ! We may look about us for Help, and cry out in vain, for none of our New Masters are ever like to lend us a kind hand to help us out. But what must be said to relieve the Consciences of such Lay People as were never christen'd by any but such as were never christen'd themselves ? Who must turn Casuist, and resolve their Doubts ? What Amulet can be thought of to charm down their Fears ? What Remedy have they under their Difficulties and Scrupulosities ? and where must they find it ? I cannot but observe, that some People may raise an ill Spirit, which, with all the Art and Cunning they have, they cannot lay again.]

Illic qui baptismum singulare servaverint, securi discumbent. Quicumque à vobis se rebaptizari consenserit, hujusmodi homini non denegatur resurrectio, quia credidit in resurrectione carnis : resurget quidem, sed *nudus*. P. 61.

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And

And besides, what a Reflection does this Notion cast upon the Right Reverend the Bishops themselves, who admit such to Holy Orders as had no other than Presbyterian Baptism, if this be null and void? "Can we imagine that

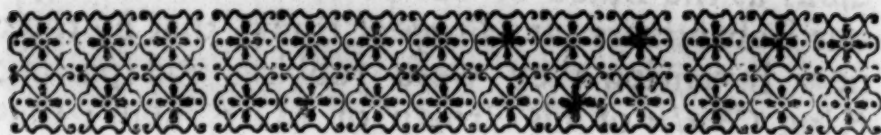
Mr. Wither's Ca- "our Venerable Prelates wou'd
vear. p. 111 "have laid Hands in Ordination
"on them that were no Christi-

"ans? that they wou'd have
"made Priests and Deacons of unbaptiz'd Pa-
"gans? or indeed is it possible for 'em to do it
"if they would? Can there be such a Monster
"in the Christian World, as a Minister that is
"no Christian?" The worst I wish our New
Masters for time to come, is more Reason and
Consistence in their Notions, more Deference
towards their Superiors, and more Charity to-
wards their Neighbours.

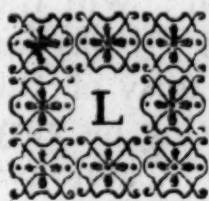
(4.) This appears from a certain Church of
England Martyr, accounted by many a Star of
the first Magnitude in the *British Orb*, I mean
King *Charles I.* who was born and baptiz'd in
Scotland when the Presbytery of that Church
was in its Strength and Glory, and its Ministers
Presbyterians. He was solemnly baptiz'd by one
of them, and his Baptism never question'd or
repeated. Now, either Presbyterian Baptisms are
good, or King *Charles* was no Christian; if he
was no Christian, he was no Martyr; for pray
what is a Martyr but a sincere Christian that en-
dures and suffers a violent Death for his Faith,
Constancy, and Christianity? If King *Charles*
be no Martyr, what abundance of brave Labour
have the Clergy of this Nation lost for these many
Years on the 30th of *January*? What a blur will
it bring over many a curious, eloquent, and elab-
orate

borate Harangue deliver'd on that Day, wherein the Blood of that King has been almost as precious as the Blood of our Saviour? Little might our Rebaptizers at *Aitenfield* think, that by their new Invention they were robbing and spoiling King *Charles* of his Crown of Martyrdom; that they were committing an unpardonable Crime by casting dishonour upon the Memory of the Royal Martyr, and making themselves as rank Enemies to that Glorious Sufferer, as those who robb'd him of his Imperial Diadem: will the true Sons of the Church con them Thanks for dealing so severely with the Christianity of the Head of the *English* Church, and razing his very Name out of the *English* Kalendar, and Catalogue of Saints? For this of Necessity, must be the pernicious tendency of denying the validity of Presbyterian Baptism.

(5.) Shall I need to add the Instances of King *James I.* and King *William*, of Glorious Memory, or others, &c? Well then, will Presbyterian Baptism serve crown'd Heads, and will it not serve poor Country-Mechanics? Is it sufficient to christianize *Sovereign Princes*, and will it not please *Houlcom-Peasants*? Have Persons of the highest Rank and Quality been satisfy'd with it, and never so much as desired a Repetition of it, and shall those pretend Scruples, that have little to recommend them to their Leaders by, but their Ignorance, Obscurity, Obsequiousness, and Bigotry; their implicit Faith, and blind Obedience? Did I instance in some *English* Bishops on this Head, my Section might be fuller, but the matter needs be no clearer than it is, what we have already consider'd are abundantly sufficient for illustration: some, I am confident, will think them too many. H 2 S E C T.



SECTION V.



ET me add a few Consequences (to what have been already interspers'd in this Vindication) which unavoidably result from the Doctrine and Practices of our *Bury-Ecclesiasticks*.

(1.) Hereby they must needs unchurch and unchristian the greatest part of the Christian reform'd World, deny their Ordination, Ministry, Christianity, Sacraments, and all their Holy Administrations: What shall we now think of *Scotland, New-England, Holland, Geneva, the Palatinate, Bremen, the Protestant Churches in Germany, Hungary, the Vaudois, and the Northern Nations*? Is it not a strange Doctrine, that represents the purest and best reformed Churches in the World, to be no better, to be no other than unbaptized Pagans and Heathens? what is this, but to cut off from Christ's Body-mystical vast Numbers, nay, the greatest Number of its eminent Members, many of whom have done and suffered exceedingly more for Christ, Christianity, Religion, and the Reformation, than those who so heavily censure them?

(2.) Hereby they extreamly weaken the Protestant Religion, discountenance the Reformation, strengthen the Hands of Papists, who are glad enough,

enough, you may be sure, when any Doctrines are broach'd that defame, and run down, the Christianity, and Ministry of the Reformed Churches; glad enough when any are ready to join with them in exterminating and rooting them up, on what Pretence soever. I cannot but observe, That the *Romish* Priests, and some of our *English* Priests, of the new Stamp, are like Two Millstones, set a going by a Spirit of Fury and Malignity, which grind our Reformers to Powder. The one represent them to the World as Hereticks, the other as unbaptiz'd Pagans, and Heathens; *Utrum horum maior, accipe.* The Matter is not much between them: The Reformers are condemn'd by both, though under a different Character. In their Representation they a little differ, but in their Condemnation of them they most amicably and sweetly agree.

(3.) Hereby instead of promoting Love, Unity, Peace, and holy Concord, they must needs promote the quite contrary; for what can possibly have a greater Tendency to exasperate the Minds of People, than to see others publicly insult them, pour Contempt and Scorn upon them; do all they can, even by a Misapplication of Ordinances, to expose them to the Ridicule and Banter of the unthinking Vulgar: Is this the Way to reconcile Dissenters to the Church? Is this the Way to heal what some call a Schism? Or bring the Minds of Men to a Temper? What's become of some Mens Charity, of some Mens Christianity? Are these Men like to be Healers of our Breaches, who are just now opening them far wider than ever they were since the Reformation? What! are Envy, Wrath, Variance, and Uncharitableness, become the Qualifications of
of

of a Reconciler, of a Gospel Preacher? There are divers moderate Members of the Church of England, both Clergy and Laity, who are extremely sorry that any of their Brethren should be carried away with such malignant and extravagant Conceits, as have been already hinted at, and with those of this candid Temper, I heartily join in this Petition,

*From Envy, Malice, and all Uncharitableness,
Good Lord deliver us.*

And in endeavouring to comply with the Holy Apostle's Exhortation, *Rom. xiv. 19. Let us therefore follow after the Things that make for Peace, and Things whereby one may edify another.*

(4.) Hereby the most sober, pious, and judicious Christians amongst us are extremely grieved, and offended. Christians of both Denominations cannot but lay it to Heart, that there is no better an Understanding amongst Ministers of the Gospel, who though they may differ in Opinion, in some disputable Things, yet should not differ so much as they do in their Affection; are grieved to see some in Place and Power to carry it so insolently towards their inferior Brethren, and saying to their Consciences, *Bow down, that we may go over*; keeping at the utmost Distance, as if they were People unfit for humane Converse; unfit to breath in *English Air*; the very Pest of the Land and Nation in which they are born: It grieves moderate Men to hear the Toleration publicly condemn'd as a *publick Nuisance*, called, *a gilded, poisonous Pill*; and the Wisdom of King *William*, and his Parliament (who, under God, sav'd the Church of *England*) so malapertly, and magisterially

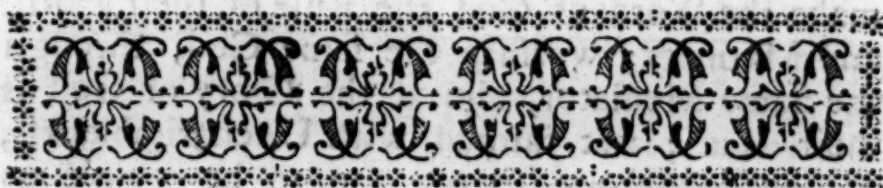
rially arraign'd, and charg'd, as if they had given this Nation Poison; though my Lords the Bishops join'd with the Parliament in this Act *; and were ready to give their Reasons for it too. 'Tis an Offence to many serious People, Conformists and Non-Conformists, that the great Things wherein Ministers of both Denominations agree, are so little insisted on, preached, and urged; and those lesser Things wherein they differ, or dissent from one another, so keenly and warmly disputed.

(5.) Hereby they endeavour to confine Christianity to a Party, to the Exclusion of others who have as good a Right to make that Claim as themselves. Christianity and Catholicism should go together; those who are sound in the Faith, holy in Life, and hold to the Foundation, make the Word of God the Rule of their Faith, and Manners; worship the same God, through the same Mediator, aim at the Glory of God as their End; not tainted with Uncharitableness, or any dangerous Error, are to be own'd as Christians and Brethren, though in some Things they are not of our Persuasion. *Why should I judge another Man's Servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth. The Kingdom of God consisteth not in Meats and Drinks; but in Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. A Spirit of Bondage and Vassalage, of Envy and Detraction, is not adapted, or suited, to the Temper of the Gospel; but a Spirit of Power, of Love, and of a sound Mind.*

* Is it not pretty to hear a Country Curate charging their Lordships with the high Crime of poisoning the Nation?

There

There were some *Jewish* Christians of old, who laid a mighty Stress upon Circumcision, as if there could be no Salvation without it: There were also *Gentile* Christians, who being uncircumcis'd, and not meddling with the antiquated Ceremonies of the Law, valued themselves upon their Freedom from that Yoke of Bondage, *i. e.* both valued themselves too much, and bore themselves too high, upon their being of this or the other Party. But the Holy Apostle assumes into his own Hands the Matter in Debate, and nonsuits their Party-Cause, and flatly tells them, *That Circumcision availeth nothing, and Uncircumcision was nothing, but a new Creature; a Faith that worketh by Love, and keeping the Commandments of God, 1 Cor. vii. 19. Gal. vi. 15. & v. 6.*



THE

P A R Æ N E T I C A L C O N C L U S I O N.

HAVE read of *Cato Major*, that he was so envy'd for his Wisdom and Virtue, that he was publicly accus'd Forty six Times, and forced to plead his Cause as often before the People; but had this Happiness, always to come off clear. The Dissenters Liberties and Immunities have been so much envy'd, their Baptisms so often attack'd,

tack'd, that they have been forced to vindicate themselves over and over. Once from a re-baptizing Assault at *Exeter*; a second Time from one at *Manchester*; and, in the Opinion of judicious Persons, unprepossess'd with Prejudice, have come off clear. What Fate is like to attend their Cause upon this third Assault, the World is like to judge. I know their Cause being supported by Truth, Charity, and Catholic Christianity, they have the better End of the Staff, and it may more easily be defended. And now, after this Essay, I hope Persons of Candor and Temper won't take it ill, that I most cordially recommend to their deliberate Choice,

(1.) Christian Love and Charity. Uncharitableness and Malignity are a fatal Canker, which will corrode the Bowels, and eat out the Vitals of our Christianity. As much Charity as we have, just so much Christianity, and no more: This noble Grace and Virtue conforms us to the Example of the Holy Jesus, who has made universal Charity the grand Character of his Religion. Would not this cement and solder the Hearts of Christians together, as the Heart of one Man; cover involuntary Infirmitie on all Hands; strengthen the Redeemer's Interest in the World; prevent Railing, Slander, Lying, unreasonable Prejudice, Bitterness, evil Speaking, rash judging, and implacable Envy, One of the Devil's Sins?

Plutarch compares envious Persons to Cupping-Glasses, which ever draw the worst Humours of the Body to them. They are like unto Flies, which resort only to the raw and corrupt Parts of the Body; or if they chance to light on a sound Part, never leave blowing on it till they dispose it to Putrification.

(2.) An impartial Enquiry and Search after Truth, both with respect to Persons and Things ; that none may be cajol'd, or impos'd upon, by the confident Affirmations, or Calumniations, of designing Men, nor condemn a Cause before they hear it ; nor believe every Thing which some Men say, merely because they say it, without the least Enquiry into Matter of Fact, Whether the Thing be so, or no. The Way which the *Roman* Judicatures, and the noble *Bereans* took, in Matters of a parallel Import, would teach the credulous more Wisdom and Discretion, were they dispos'd to take it. We know who they be that say that Presbyterian Ministers are no Ministers, but impudent Intruders into that Sacred Function : But their *αὐτὸ ἔφα*, their Saying so, does not prove it ; and is but a weak Evidence, when it comes to be narrowly consider'd. But alas ! it serves some Sort of People when it comes out of the Mouths of spiritual Guides, who don't love that Underlings should so much as question their pastoral Oracles. Our Faith in Religion is best directed by a Divine Testimony ; and in Matters Sacred and Divine, 'tis the safest Way to subject our Reason to supernatural Revelation.

(3.) A sincere Regard to the Authority of the Sacred Oracles, a due Deference to the infallible Truths contained in the Word of God : A Liberty which People have, and should have, of making the best they can of their Bibles, whether or no they find any humane Constitutions clashing with them. Keep God's Word, and God's Word will keep you. Look upon it to be the Supreme Judge of Controversies, *fidei, & morum norma*, the Rule both of Faith and Manners ;

to be the Law by which we, and those who are our Opposers, must certainly be judged at the last Day, when every Tongue shall confess to God, preferable to humane Constitutions, Traditions, Councils, Fathers, how much soever these may be magnify'd, and the other disregarded.

*Una apex, verbi ratione valentior omni ;
Milleq; decretis, conciliisq; prior.*

I know, and am very well appriz'd, that Tradition has its Use, in the Transmission of the Books within the Sacred Canon down to us, through the several Ages and Centuries of the Church. That Councils have done good Service to the Church, in discovering, and condemning Heresies, when they have at first risen, or after some Suppression, have begun to repullulate. As the Council of Nice, in repelling the *Arian* Heresy. I know that the Fathers, especially of the first Three Hundred Years after our Saviour, had some Advantages to know the Customs of the Church in those early Days, which we have not, who live in an Age so long after them : But still, they were but Men at the best, and liable to Mistakes, Errors, and Infirmities, as well as others. Some say (as I remember) that *Tertulian* montaniz'd ; that *Cyprian* plaid the same Part that our Gentlemen have lately done, rebaptiz'd. Besides, learned Men have not entirely agreed among themselves, which Works bearing the Names of some of them, have been genuine, and authentic ; and which have been forg'd, and spurious : And these Differences have occasion'd warm Debates. It has, moreover, been the

Custom of sundry Writers in the Church of Rome, contesting with Protestant Reformers, to lead these (if possible) into a Wood of Fathers; because the Scriptures they found, were an unpromising Topick: But the Fathers, especially those the Romanists quoted, seem'd to speak more favourably of their Cause, and indeed well they might, when the Papists Interpolations, and *Indices Expurgatorij* had so well prepar'd them for their Purpose.

And yet for all that I have said on this Head, the Dissenters are far from fearing a Defeat from this Quarter; let any that but suspect so much, consult *Salmatus*, *Blundel*, Arch-bishop *Usher's Reduction of Episcopacy to the Form of Synodical Government*, *Ames*, Sir Peter King's *Unity, and Discipline of the Primitive Church*, Mr. Baxter's *Abbreviation of Councils*, his *Treatise of Episcopacy*, Mr. James Owen's *Plea for Scripture Ordination*, and his *Tutamen Evangelicum*, in Answer to the late Rector of Bury, Mr. Boyse's *Ancient Episcopacy*, and after all, let him tell me whether the Ancient Fathers say nothing of the Power of meer Presbyters, and whether or no they leave our Cause altogether desperate. But to proceed, many of these Controversies would have been amicably determin'd and compos'd, which have so long disturb'd the Christian World, had Men come with unprejudic'd Minds for Counsel to Divine Revelation, resolv'd that their Cause shou'd either have stood or fallen by its Award.

(4.) A firm Adherence to the grand Foundations of Christianity and our Holy Religion, a learning and knowing these our selves, and teaching them our Children; an exemplar of sound Words, it concerns both them and us to know, that

that real Piety, sound Faith, and good Works, may abound more and more amongst us, not laying the stress and weight of our Salvation meerly or mainly upon our being Members of such a Church, our observing, or not observing mutable or variable Rights and Ceremonies, upon this or any other Branch of doubtful Disputation; but upon the Covenant of Grace, the Promise of God, the Merits, Passion, Satisfaction, and Mediation of *Jesus* our Redeemer, Faith in Him, Repentance unto Life, a sincere Obedience to Gospel requirements, and last of all, *Evangelical Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* — These are essential, fundamental Truths and Doctrines, which we must believe and obey if ever we would be sav'd; and tho' we may and ought to joyn our selves to the purest Churches we can, yet our Privileges without vital Holiness will not save us; our crying out, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these,* and our despising others because they don't fall under our Denomination, our endeavouring to make others worse than they are, that we our selves may appear to be better than we are, I say, these things last mention'd will never bring our Souls to Heaven. Tho' the *Jews* were the Seed of *Abraham's* Flesh, it wou'd avail them little whilst they were not the Seed of *Abraham's* Faith, but acted and lived as if they had another Father. Why should we despise our Brother, or set at naught our Brother? for we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of *Jesus Christ*.

(5.) A heavenly Mind and Life. *A wisdom which comes down from above, which is first pure, and then peaceable, easie to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and hypocrisy: Oh that*

that there were more of this even in the Christian reform'd World. That many have been endowed with this Heavenly Wisdom, both in the Establish'd Church, and in the Churches of Dissenters, the charitable will by no means deny; and those who meet in Heaven will at last be unanimous or of one mind, tho' in some things they may differ in this Probationary State: there, *Luther* and *Calvin* will be agreed. *Hooper* and *Ridley* did Harmonize in a Prison, and near Heaven, and wrote most lovingly and tenderly one to another; tho' some time before, *Ridley* had been warm for, and *Hooper* warm against the use of the VESTMENTS. In King *Edward's* Reign, the fire of Persecution quickly consum'd the Stubble of such Altercations. Cou'd we of this Generation help one another forward in our way to Heaven, we should do God, and each other more real Service than by our alienation of Affection, carrying it at the greatest Distance; and by a fomenting any kind of unreasonable, unchristian, and uncharitable Jealousies one of another. We cannot say but we have much Light in this Nation, oh that we had more Love; But alas, the Spirit of Love seems to be exceedingly withdrawn and departed at this Day, and the late advanced Notions, Rebaptizations, and palpable Innovations, which have been set on foot, and encouraged by a High-Party among us, who are, as the learned Bishop of *Bangor* tells them, evidently declining, and going off from the Principles on which the Reformation of the Church of *England* is founded: I say such Things and Actions have a direct tendency to drive away the Spirit of Love, and Peace, and Truth, farther than ever from us; which Spirit, Frame, and
Temper,

Temper, is much of our Disposition for the Joy of the heavenly World. 'Tis matter of continual Comfort to us, that there is a perfect and happy State before us, that our Way is open, and that it is not in the Power of Man to stop it; that a Good God is more merciful to us, all than we are to one another, doing Good to such as are not Good, and being Kind to the Unthankful, and the Evil.

July 1st, 1720.

F I N I S.



Presbyterian Ordination, &c.
 T. 1. is much of our Disposition for the
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